



United States Senator
Richard Shelby
REPORTS TO ALABAMA



MARRIAGE PENALTY TAX

This week the United States Senate took another historic step toward reducing the tax burden of America's working families by eliminating the marriage penalty tax. According to a recent report by the Congressional Budget Office, almost half of all married couples pay higher taxes due to their marital status. On average this "marriage penalty" costs married couples an additional \$1,400 in taxes each year.

At a time when tax burdens are at their highest and the federal government is expecting a non-Social Security surplus in excess of \$100 billion for 2001, I think it is high time we return some of that money to the hard-working people of America. As you probably know, the American family's tax burden is higher than it has been since World War II. In fact, the average American will have to work 129 days this year just to pay their total tax bill.

It is patently unfair that men and

women should have to pay a larger tax bill simply because they decide to marry. Unfortunately, for too many years, the federal government has made marriage a taxable event; ensuring that married couples pay millions more in taxes each year than they would have if they were single.

I continue to be amazed by those people that oppose treating married couples fairly. Eliminating the marriage penalty tax is not about benefiting the rich, it is about restoring fairness to the tax code. I do not believe that a school teacher and a fireman who marry and each earns around \$30,000 a year are rich and yet they pay a \$1,000 marriage penalty tax each year. The federal government should not impose a penalty on two people simply because they fall in love and decide to get married.

Over the past few years, the federal government has tightened its belt and restrained unnecessary government spending. At the same time our

economy has experienced an enormous boom. These two factors together have allowed us to balance the federal budget, begin to pay down the national debt, and experience unprecedented non-Social Security budget surpluses. I believe that the American people have greatly contributed to that unprecedented budget surplus and therefore, should share in the benefits it affords.

I do not believe that Washington knows best how to spend your money. That is why I think that you, the American people, America's working families, should get back some of what you have contributed to the surplus. One way that we can, and will do this is by eliminating the unfair marriage penalty tax.

The ball is in the President's court now. Let's hope that he believes as we do: that tax code should not continue to punish men and women simply because they are married.